

The
Jewish Guild
for
the Blind

056



Annual Report 1976



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

1976 was a year of beginnings for The Guild. We began preparations for the opening of a young adults' hostel. We started work on a major expansion move of our Sheltered Workshop, and expansion of our Work Activity Center. We broke ground for a new Home for Aged Blind. These were just some of the beginnings undertaken during the past year.

Prior to the beginning of the hostel, a laborious search for a suitable building, and extended negotiations on financing and design were necessary. Similarly with the Workshop. Finally, when the State's fiscal crisis dried up financing for the construction of the Home, months of involved dealings were required before private financing was arranged. Meetings, evaluations, negotiations, at all hours, with all kinds of deadlines, as the days became weeks, then months. At the close of 1976 the openings – of Hostel, Workshop and Work Activity Center – were just weeks away. These were impressive milestones in The Guild's sustained progress during 1976.

Therefore let us confirm the indebtedness of The Guild and the clients we serve, to the members of the Board and the staff who persevered tirelessly to see vital projects through to their beginnings. This readiness to serve was the beginning of The Guild itself in 1914, as it is the motive for us today in our continuing effort to expand the horizons of all who cannot see.

As my term of office nears its close, I am grateful for the support extended to me, support which enabled The Guild to continue broadening and improving its services to our clients.

My successor is sure to face many challenges during his tenure. I am confident that with the support of The Guild's many friends, the backing of the Board of Directors, the inspiration of our clients and the cooperation of staff, he will move The Guild forward on its path of ever-better service to those who come to us for aid.

Irving G. Kaufmann



**REPORT BY
THE EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

As The Guild provided its broad range of specialized services to 5,181 individuals and families during 1976, people from far and near were watching. From Japan, Ghana, Israel and England, from California, Puerto Rico, the midwest, New England and the greater New York area, they came to observe The Guild in action.

"They" were students, educators, professionals and administrators concerned with serving people who are blind or visually impaired. The term blind covers those who are totally blind and those who are legally blind, all of whom are served by The Guild. A person is legally blind when his or her vision cannot be corrected by glasses to 20/200.

They came to learn how The Guild helps its clients – young, old, middle-aged; multihandicapped, average and superior, and when possible, to take home some ideas on how to increase the effectiveness of their efforts on behalf of blind people.

You are invited to observe, through this report, to develop your understanding of blind and visually handicapped persons, and how The Guild serves them. The Guild's hard-earned distinction is its ability to help when help seems beyond reasonable hope.

While we continued to move forward on many fronts during 1976, our progress in increasing and improving services for the most difficult cases, the blind clients who are mentally retarded, physically damaged or otherwise multihandicapped, is among the more significant developments of the year.

We seek normalcy

First, a simple truth, basic to The Guild approach: the person who happens to be blind is much more like most of us than most of us tend to realize. The many and diverse programs of The Guild aim to help the person who is blind to live as most people do – independently and productively – within the limits of his or her total capabilities.

Another Guild fundamental: every service provided is geared to the needs and abilities of each client served. Sometimes this means long stretches of after-hours counseling and guidance. Sometimes it requires wading into bureaucracy to cut through red tape. Whatever the individual need, The Guild strives to respond to it, and the client soon knows that he or she is being helped by a caring and conscientious person. Given that knowledge, the client is better able to participate and to benefit from the services being offered.

The Guild's painstaking person-to-person approach is a major factor in its effectiveness with the most challenging clients – blind multihandicapped children and young adults, most of them mentally retarded. To help them, The Guild maintains a unique variety of programs. The combination of distinctive services and programs has earned The Guild a reputation as the agency to handle the most difficult cases.

In 1976 we

- served 34 blind multihandicapped children in The Guild's special school, approved and supported by the New York State Department of Education, the New York City Board of Education and the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene. For many of them, The Guild offers the only alternative to life in an institution.
- expanded our young adult program to a total of 36 multihandicapped young people in four groups receiving day treatment and rehabilitation services. Both this program and the school are licensed as a day treatment program.
- conducted a summer day camp for multihandicapped children and full-time summer program for multihandicapped young adults, including outings and overnight camping.
- began the expansion of our Work Activity Center, an adapted sheltered workshop which in 1977 will expand to serve 100 multihandicapped clients with gainful employment, making it the largest facility of its kind in the nation.
- launched two evening group work programs for multihandicapped men and women served by the Work Activity Center, thus providing them with supervised leisure-hour social and recreational opportunities.

The Guild School aims to help the multihandicapped child stay with the family. It does this by developing the child's basic skills as a foundation for self-reliant living. The young adult program is designed to realize similar goals as The Guild School, though on a more developed plane. Simplified prevocational training prepares qualified clients for gainful employment in the Work Activity Center.

Joselow House

As pointed out in the President's message we completed the acquisition, and by year-end were finishing renovations on the fine building which would shortly open as our community residence for multihandicapped young adults. Aside from addressing one of the most difficult problems facing handicapped people in New York City, housing, Joselow House provides the opportunity for round-the-clock affirmation of guidance and instruction provided during the day treatment programs at The Guild. Our round-the-clock experiences on overnight camping trips with these clients give us high hopes for added client benefits from the residence.



Joselow House

Joselow House, the young adult program and The Guild School are administered by The Guild's Department of Mental Health Services. The Department also operates a psychiatric clinic for clients and their families, probably the only one of its kind in the nation.

Since family relationships and emotional problems often affect the clients' potentials for rehabilitation, the psychiatric clinic plays a vital role in the progress of many who come to The Guild for help. Licensed by the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, the clinic's services include individual, family and group therapy and counseling, as well as psychological testing and casework.

Fitting the service to the client

Before such services or those of any other Guild department are provided, the potential client meets The Guild's Intake Coordinator, a seasoned social worker of wide background and developed insight. In the course of becoming acquainted, the Intake Coordinator spells out how The Guild might help. At the same time she observes the client, noting the areas of potential problems, and of promise. Later she will discuss the client's needs at an intake conference at which heads of service departments – Mental Health, Rehabilitation and Group Work – join. Services to be provided to the client are agreed upon, and priorities are set.

If the client's needs cannot be met by The Guild, the Intake Coordinator guides the client to the appropriate agency. Sometimes guidance isn't enough. Then she makes the initial contact for the client. In 1976 the Intake Coordinator responded to 922 requests for help, up six percent from 1975.

REHABILITATION — TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

For many Guild clients the road to independence begins with training in independent travel. Clients are taught the use of the white cane. They learn to travel alone – to The Guild, the job, etc. They learn to use buses and trains. This is one of many services of The Guild's Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

In 1976 the Department served 595 clients, up 12 percent from 1975. The services they received included screening and evaluation, counseling, learning skills of daily living, prevocational training, remedial education in preparation for high school equivalency tests, transcription typing (medical, legal and commercial) and training in vending stand operation.

Begun in 1972 at the invitation of the New York State Commission for the Visually Handicapped, to serve clients from all of New York State, the vending training program has been utilized by clients from Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New Jersey. The effectiveness of this program was recognized by the Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare, which invited The Guild to set up a similar program in Puerto Rico. There The Guild is providing training and guidance to the Commonwealth in setting up a program similar to the one The Guild operates in New York.

Department services include job placement, and significantly though indirect, employment development. The placement specialist succeeded in securing employment for 19 clients in 1976. The employment development specialist, a recently created position, concentrated on developing job opportunities among major corporations in such fields as banking, publishing, government and health education. As a result of contacts made with 52 firms, a total of 36 new positions were opened through her efforts. These were referred to the team of placement counselors from The Guild, the New York Association for the Blind and the Industrial Home for the Blind, who work cooperatively with the employment development specialist.

Since the needs of clients are so diverse, the scope of services furnished ranges widely. A screening in the skills area may require just two or three sessions. On the other hand a multihandicapped young adult who completed training and entered the Work Activity Center, had received instruction over a 40-month time span. During that period he received 722 hours of mobility training (he travels independently now), 182 hours of homemaker training, 69 hours of communication skills training and daily prevocational training. He learned such basic skills as signing his name, telling time, preparing meals, use of public transportation, sidewalk travel, utilizing sound cues, body movement and money value.

TO WORK AND TO EARN

The drive for independence is just as strong in a blind person as in someone who has sight. The same holds true for blind persons who have additional handicaps such as deafness, cerebral palsy or epilepsy. They may be eager and able to work, yet unemployable in conventional settings. For these people The Guild operates its Sheltered Workshop. Performing varied services: bagging, packaging, collating, assembly and sewing, to name a few, the Sheltered Workshop provides gainful employment.

A shop counselor is on hand to help with on-job and personal problems of the clients. Possibilities of upgrading client performance and earnings are sought out constantly.

Hours worked and client earnings reached alltime highs in 1976. Hours worked exceeded 1976 by 11 percent, while earnings were 20 percent higher than in the previous year. As the year drew to a close, preparations for an expansion which will make The Guild's one of the largest sheltered workshops in the land were well under way.

The Guild has leased 90,000 square feet (over two acres) of the mammoth former Port Authority building at 111 Eighth Avenue for the expanded Sheltered Workshop. To start operation early in 1977, it will be served by six freight elevators which can bring trucks up to 34 feet long to its sixth floor docks, plus street level facilities for trailer trucks. Clients can enter the building directly from the Independent subway station without going out on the street, and there is underground access to the Sixth and Seventh Avenue subways.

Efficiencies in production and utilization of staff will be gained from the centralized single-level operation. In addition, even better service will be provided to shop customers, thanks to the availability of extensive warehouse space.



A division of the Sheltered Workshop

The new location will enable the Workshop to enter manufacturing – paper pads, looseleaf fillers, and file cards – for the first time. This operation will use the most advanced standard industrial machinery. It will therefore be possible to train qualified clients for jobs in the paper industry. When the new shop and the expanded Work Activity Center are operating full scale, they will employ nearly 300 clients.

**PURPOSE AND
PERSPECTIVE
THROUGH
SOCIALIZATION**

For many of the more than 600 blind senior citizens served by The Guild's Group Work Department, "home" is defined by the four walls of a furnished room. The activities offered through this department offer the older blind men and women an opportunity to expand their cultural and social horizons, to foster a wholesome perspective through interaction with others, and to develop interests which can enrich the clients' at-home hours. For an idea of the scope, consider this program for a normal week: current events, sewing, several kinds of music appreciation groups, literature, ceramics, weaving, sculpture, instrumental music instruction, continuing education, woodworking, leather craft, mosaics, social and discussion groups.

Until November 1976, all group work activities had been financed entirely by voluntary contributions to The Guild. In November a small but significant change took place. A meeting between executives of the New York State Commission for the Visually Handicapped and several Guild executives resulted in a contract for state support of group work services for a few clients. This first commitment of public funds for group work confirms our conviction that these services are essential in order to live a full and wholesome life. It again affirms that the person who is blind needs access to a well-rounded regimen of social, educational and recreational activities. Though voluntary contributions still must be counted on to support group work services for close to 99% of the clients involved, this significant step by the state is promising.

Services of the department, mostly in the hand skills area, also are provided to children in The Guild School, to the multihandicapped young adults, and to a college-caliber young adult group.

In 1976 590 clients participated in more than one group work activity on an 8% increase over 1975. The program operated for 202 days, with an aggregate attendance of 18,033 days, an daily average of 89 clients participating in activities of The Guild and in the summer program which utilizes the grounds of our Home for Aged Blind.

**WHEN
TOTAL CARE
IS NEEDED**

The Guild's Home for Aged Blind, on a high wooded site of over 11 acres in Yonkers, provides a sheltered environment for 135 men and women, about half of whom are over 85 years of age. Protected paths crisscross the grounds, offering residents the pleasure of safe outdoor walks. A well-rounded variety of activities and entertainment programs provide social and cultural opportunities. The Home's medical wing furnishes round-the-clock nursing care during illness or convalescence. Hospital care and out-patient medical services

are provided at Montefiore Medical Center, with which the Home has a clinical affiliation.

In 1976 the Home served a total of 169 men and women, an increase of 16 percent over 1975, and in the latter part of the year, reached a record high occupancy level. Improvements and innovations during the year included an Eyetone machine and the Traveling Store. Both these developments reduced the burdens on residents and staff alike. The Eyetone machine enables the nursing staff to check residents' blood sugar levels, eliminating time-consuming and tiring trips to and from Montefiore Hospital. The Traveling Store, by turning the Home auditorium into a mini-department store, enabled residents to shop for a broad range of apparel without being subjected to the strain and hazards of shopping trips to crowded stores.

Hopes were high in the fall of 1976, when ground was broken for a new, larger and improved Home. Unfortunately construction was held up because of a clouded rate situation stemming from economy measures taken by the State. The plans are ready, the financing has been arranged, and we still are hopeful that we will be able to proceed with the new Home and the apartments which will make possible semi-independent living for 15 couples.



Proposed new Home for Aged Blind, Yonkers, N.Y.

In the meanwhile, improvements continued. Ongoing instruction programs for nursing and medical personnel maintained impetus toward upgrading services. During 1976 the Home was host to 36 meetings and conferences, with the subjects ranging from Infectious Disease Control to Sexuality and the Senior Citizen.

Keeping up with current literature

The Braille and Tape Cassette Library served 1,412 users in 1976, an increase of nearly 8% over 1975. Braille volumes circulated totalled 18,902; cassettes, 38,449. While more than half the cassettes went to New York State users, more than two-thirds of the braille volumes went out of the state. Foreign readers received 1,589 braille volumes and 341 tape cassettes. During the year 619 volumes in braille and 101 tape cassette titles were added to the Library.

Actually, the number of people benefiting from our cassettes of current best sellers far exceeded these figures. Our cassettes were regularly broadcast by the Oklahoma radio station for blind and handicapped listeners, they were duplicated and distributed to bedridden patients in Nassau County hospitals, and arrangements were recently completed for their duplication and distribution by the Syracuse Lighthouse.



Preparing to duplicate tape cassettes

Learning to help

For a number of years The Guild has been an important center for the training of graduate students in the helping professions. Social workers, rehabilitation counselors, teachers of handicapped children, home economists, and mobility instructors studying in local universities have received their field training at The Guild. In 1976 a total of 20 such students did so, including one young woman from Japan who trained at our Home in Yonkers, and two mobility students from Boston University.

**To care
and share —
Guild Volunteers**

During 1976 a remarkable group of people performed an extraordinary variety of services, contributing to practically every department of The Guild. These were our volunteers, 619 of them, who gave 48,170 hours of their time, equivalent to 37 full-time staff members.

One has only to see a volunteer in action to be reminded of how much more than money goes into the value of volunteer services. For the giving of self — and companionship, sympathy and helpfulness — this is precious beyond price. The Guild's volunteers are a source of pride to us all and the cause for profound gratitude.

At the end of 1976, I informed the Officers and the Board of The Guild of my plan to retire before the end of 1977. This report then is my valedictory. I served during the last year of The Guild's occupancy of the building at 1880 Broadway and executed the move to our present City Center early in 1971.

The changes during these years have been many, few dramatic, but important because they meant better service to more people who needed help to cope with a sighted world. They are the result of the devoted efforts of all concerned with the Guild, the staff, the volunteers and the Officers and Board members.

I have served under three Presidents, each different from the other, but each completely devoted to assuring The Guild's ability to serve those who sought its help. At all times I had their support in my efforts to strengthen and expand our services to blind people. This support was also manifested by those Board members who undertook often arduous committee assignments and through whose efforts important developments in Guild program were made possible.

The Women's Division and the Guild Associates (the latter formerly the Junior Division) brought strength, manpower and manpower to The Guild. Their devotion to the purposes of The Guild helped it accomplish much in which I too can take pride.

It would be amiss were I not to mention the substantial and constant support of the New York State Commission for the Visually Handicapped. During the years I have served The Guild, the Director of the Commission and his staff have been a major factor in helping us initiate new programs and in maintaining those existing services which most effectively serve the blind people in our community. This appreciation must be extended to the regional office of HEW, which has constantly made itself available for consultation and support.

A gratifying aspect of my tenure at The Guild has been the eightfold increase in the support of our programs by governmental agencies. Without these public funds much that we have accomplished would have remained undone. I have had the gratification which comes from a well-trained and devoted staff. My administrative staff has not been a group of compliant followers. They have had their own concepts and convictions, but they have unfailingly supported my every effort to help The Guild serve the clients more and more effectively. The professional staff of The Guild has made possible much of that effectiveness and the non-professional staff has aided immeasurably.

I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to serve The Guild, and to have been a factor in the rehabilitation of the thousands of men, women and children we have served during these last seven years. My service to The Guild has been a proud culmination to 50 years as a social worker serving people.

The special quality of The Guild, rooted in concern for the unique individuality of every client, is confirmed again and again, as unsolicited letters from both clients and professionals from other agencies constantly testify.

The Guild goes on. My thanks and good wishes go with it, for continuing leadership and progress in service to all blind and visually impaired persons who seek its aid.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Aubrey Mallach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Aubrey Mallach

LEGACIES

Through the years, many thoughtful persons have provided in their wills for the support of Guild services to blind and visually impaired persons. We are grateful for the help provided by the friends of The Guild listed on this page, whose bequests were received during 1976. The memory of their concern for the handicapped is a lasting inspiration to all members of The Guild family.

May we suggest that when reviewing your will, you consider helping the blind and visually handicapped persons whom The Guild serves, including the children, the aged and the multihandicapped.

Morris A. Anesh
Abraham L. Baumann
Pincus Berger
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Emanuel L. Bloom
Winifred Brown
Edna Cohoon
Louisa Danish
Anita De Lemos
Gabriella De Santho
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Estelle R. Newman City Center

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HOME FOR AGED BLIND
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Yonkers, New York 10701

GUILD INDUSTRIES
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JOSELOW HOUSE
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Upon request you may obtain a copy of our last annual financial report from The Jewish Guild for the Blind – 15 West 65th Street, New York, N.Y. 10023 or from The N.Y. State Board of Social Services, Charities Registration Section, Office Tower, Empire State Plaza, Albany, N.Y. 12223

